

## Message Text

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TO USDEL SECRETARY PRIORITY

UNCLAS STATE 183302 TOSEC 080116

FOR HODDING CARTER FROM S/PRS (JOHN TRATTNER)

E.O. 11652: N/A

TAGS: SOPN, OVIP (VANCE, CYRUS R.)

SUBJECT: EVENING TRAVELLING PRESS SUMMARY, AUGUST 4

NO. 14

WIRE SERVICES

UPI -- ANDERSON FROM DAMASCUS

LEAD: "PRESIDENT ASSAD THURSDAY REJECTED IDEA OF  
'WORKING GROUP' PROPOSED BY VANCE. HE TOLD NEWS CONFERENCE  
THESE NEGOTIATIONS SHOULD HAPPEN AT GENEVA. SO WHY  
SHOULD WE REPLACE THEM WITH SOMETHING ELSE?"

OTHER POINTS:

-- ASSAD MET PRESS AFTER MORE THAN THREE HOURS OF TALKS  
WITH VANCE. VANCE SAID AFTER TALKS THAT "DIFFERENCES  
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REMAIN ON SEVERAL ITEMS" BUT DID NOT SPECIFY.

-- ASSAD SAID "IF WORKING GROUP SHOULD FAIL, IT WOULD  
HAVE SAME RESULTS AS IF GENEVA CONFERENCE FAILED. IT  
IS BETTER THAT WE GO TO A GENEVA CONFERENCE AFTER  
THOROUGH PREPARATIONS. THERE IS A POSSIBILITY THAT  
WORKING GROUP WOULD BE LOOKED UPON AS COMPETITION FOR

GENEVA AND NONE OF US WOULD LIKE THAT.... WE DO NOT SEE THE BENEFIT OF THE WORKING GROUP." NEVERTHELESS, HE SAID EFFORTS FOR NEGOTIATED SETTLEMENT SHOULD CONTINUE. AS ALTERNATIVE, HE PROPOSED "CONSTANT CONTACTS AMONG PARTIES" INVOLVED IN SEARCH FOR SETTLEMENT, BUT DID NOT DESCRIBE FORM OR PLACE FOR SUCH CONTACTS.

-- AT NEWS CONFERENCE ASSAD INSISTED REPEATEDLY THAT PLO SHOULD BE REPRESENTED AT GENEVA.

-- STATEMENT ISSUED BY PRESIDENTIAL PALACE AFTER VANCE-ASSAD TALKS ALSO EXPRESSED DOUBT OF SINCERITY OF ISRAEL'S DESIRE FOR PEACE AND ON POSSIBILITY "TOWARD ACHIEVING SERIOUS PROGRESS TOWARD PEACE."

REUTERS: GUTMAN FROM DAMASCUS

LEAD: "ASSAD TONIGHT REJECTED U.S.-EGYPTIAN PROPOSAL FOR FOREIGN MINISTERS MEETING TO PREPARE FOR RESUMPTION OF GENEVA CONFERENCE. THIS WORKING GROUP IS A QUESTION OF A MEETING BETWEEN ARABS AND ISRAELIS. THIS SHOULD HAPPEN AT GENEVA. WHY SHOULD WE REPLACE GENEVA?" ASSAD ASKED AT NEWS CONFERENCE. 'IT IS BETTER TO GO TO GENEVA WITH GOOD PREPARATIONS.'"

OTHER POINTS:  
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-- ASSAD SAID THAT, WHILE HE WAS OPPOSED TO WORKING GROUP, HIS FOREIGN MINISTER WOULD BE GOING TO NEW YORK FOR UNGA.

-- IN STATEMENT ON DAMASCUS TALKS, SYRIAN GOVERNMENT SAID IT TOLD VANCE THAT "POSITIONS AND BEHAVIOR OF ISRAELI AUTHORITIES DO NOT INDICATE THEIR DESIRE FOR PEACE, NOR DO THEY INDICATE ANY POSSIBILITY FOR REALIZING SERIOUS PROGRESS TOWARD PEACE."

-- SYRIAN STATEMENT REAFFIRMED SYRIAN POSITION ON NEED FOR FULL ISRAELI WITHDRAWAL FROM TERRITORIES TAKEN IN JULY 1967.

-- SYRIA SAID ATMOSPHERE FOR MEETING WITH VANCE WAS CORDIAL AND "IT WAS AGREED TO CONTINUE EFFORTS AND CONTACTS IN ORDER TO OVERCOME AS MANY OF THE DIFFICULTIES AS POSSIBLE."

-- IN STORY FILED EARLIER, GUTMAN SAID VANCE SAID HE HAD DISCUSSED PROPOSAL, WORKED OUT WITH SADAT, FOR

WORKING GROUP. HE DID NOT TELL NEWSMEN WHAT ASSAD'S REACTION WAS.

AP -- BARRY SCHWEID FROM DAMASCUS

LEAD: "SYRIA TURNED DOWN A U.S.-ENDORSED SUGGESTION THAT MIDDLE EAST FOREIGN MINISTERS MEET BEFORE A GENEVA PEACE CONFERENCE IS HELD, SAYING TODAY IT IS 'BETTER IF WB CONCENTRATE AT THIS STAGE' ON THE CONFERENCE ITSELF."

OTHER POINTS:

-- PRESIDENT HAFEZ ASSAD SAID HE PREFERRED TO MOVE DIRECTLY TO A WELL-PREPARED GENEVA PEACE CONFERENCE, ADDING THAT THE EGYPTIAN IDEA OF A MINISTERIAL "WORKING

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GROUP" MIGHT BE VIEWED AS A "COMPETITOR" TO THE CONFERENCE. "OUR BROTHERS IN EGYPT PERHAPS SAW CERTAIN BENEFITS WHICH SO FAR WE HAVE NOT SEEN," ASSAD TOLD A NEWS CONFERENCE. "IT'S BETTER IF WE CONCENTRATE AT THIS STAGE ON THE GENEVA CONFERENCE, PREPARE FOR IT WELL, AND THEN RECONVENE IT AT THE PROPER TIME."

-- EARLIER, ASSAD WAS QUOTED AS TELLING VANCE THAT ISRAELI BEHAVIOR IN THE WEST BANK OF THE JORDAN RIVER IS NOT COMPATIBLE WITH A SERIOUS INTEREST IN PEACE.

EVENING TELEVISION

CBS' CRONKITE: "SYRIAN PRESIDENT ASSAD LATE TODAY REJECTED AN AMERICAN-EGYPTIAN PROPOSAL FOR A FALL MEETING OF ARAB AND ISRAELI FOREIGN MINISTERS IN THE UNITED STATES. ASSAD'S INSISTENCE THAT ANY PEACE NEGOTIATIONS BE HELD ONLY IN GENEVA WITH FULL PALESTINIAN PARTICIPATION WAS A SETBACK TO U.S. SECRETARY OF STATE VANCE'S CURRENT MIDEAST PEACE TRIP. ASSAD SAID THAT A THREE-HOUR MEETING WITH VANCE DID NOT CLEAR UP THEIR DIFFERENCES."

ABC'S WALTERS: "SECRETARY OF STATE VANCE MET WITH SYRIAN PRESIDENT ASSAD TODAY, BUT THE RESULTS WERE DISAPPOINTING. ASSAD REJECTED THE U.S.-EGYPTIAN PLAN FOR A MEETING OF MIDEAST FOREIGN MINISTERS IN WASHINGTON. THERE WAS HOPE THAT MEETING WOULD PAVE THE WAY TO A SUCCESSFUL GENEVA PEACE CONFERENCE."

THERE WERE NO REPORTS FROM KALB OR DUNSMORE.

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NBC

CHANCELLOR: SECRETARY OF STATE VANCE'S MISSION TO THE MIDDLE EAST REACHED SYRIA TODAY, WHERE HE RAN INTO A CATALOGUE OF SYRIAN OPPOSITION. PRESIDENT ASSAD SAID HE WAS AGAINST AN EGYPTIAN-AMERICAN PROPOSAL FOR A WORKING GROUP OF FOREIGN MINISTERS TO PREPARE FOR A GENEVA CONFERENCE ON THE MIDDLE EAST, THAT HE SEES NO PROGRESS AT ALL TOWARD A GENEVA CONFERENCE, AND THAT ISRAELI ACTIONS ON THE OCCUPIED WEST BANK SHOW THE ISRAELIS DON'T REALLY WANT PEACE. SO SAID PRESIDENT ASSAD. THE QUESTION OF THE PALESTINIANS WAS ALSO DISCUSSED TODAY. RICHARD VALERIANI REPORTS BY SATELLITE FROM SYRIA.

VALERIANI: IF THERE IS ONE PLACE WHERE VANCE IS GOING TO GET A REALISTIC VIEW OF THE PROBLEM OF REPRESENTATION FOR THE PALESTINIANS IN ARAB-ISRAELI PEACE TALKS, IT WAS DAMASCUS. VANCE MET FIRST HERE WITH FOREIGN MINISTER KHADDAM, WHO WITH OTHER SYRIAN LEADERS, IS A HARD-LINE SUPPORTER OF THE PALESTINE LIBERATION ORGANIZATION.

THE SYRIANS INSIST THAT IF THERE'S A GENEVA PEACE CONFERENCE THE PLO MUST BE INVITED. THAT VIEW WAS RE-AFFIRMED BY SYRIAN PRESIDENT ASSAD DURING A TWO HOUR MEETING WITH VANCE. ASSAD HAD MET WITH PALESTINIAN LEADERS ONLY TWO DAYS AGO, AND PROMISED THEM UNSWERVING SUPPORT FOR PLO PARTICIPATION IN THE PEACE PROCESS

IN EXCHANGE FOR PLO RESTRAINT IN LEBANON, WHERE SYRIAN SOLDIERS ARE TRYING TO KEEP THE PEACE. LATER VANCE INDICATED THERE HAD BEEN NO PROGRESS ON THE PALESTINIAN QUESTION. SOME DIPLOMATICS HERE BELIEVE THAT DESPITE THE SYRIANS STRONG DEFENSE OF THE PALESTINIAN CAUSE, THEY AND THE OTHER ARABS WOULD BE WILLING TO PUT OFF THE WHOLE QUESTION OF PALESTINIAN REPRESENTATION AT UNCLASSIFIED

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PEACE TALKS, AT LEAST FOR THE TIME BEING, IF THE UNITED STATES WOULD ONLY DEAL DIRECTLY WITH THE PLO. BUT THE UNITED STATES ABSOLUTELY REFUSES TO DO THAT UNTIL THE PLO RECOGNIZES THE RIGHT OF ISRAEL TO LIVE IN PEACE. CHRISTOPHER

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